REFERENCE GUIDE

Phrases People Think Are in the Bible

A short reference guide to common sayings, misquotes, and Bible-adjacent phrases

For Bible readers, teachers, writers, and anyone checking a familiar quote before sharing it.

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Guide	A QuotesFromBible.com Reference Guide
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INTRODUCTION

Why this guide exists

Many familiar phrases sound biblical. Some are direct Bible phrases. Some are close paraphrases. Some come from Christian tradition, sermons, literature, or wider popular culture. Others are real biblical ideas expressed in wording that is not actually found in Scripture.

This guide is designed to help readers slow down before quoting a phrase as a Bible verse. It does not try to shame people for using familiar sayings. Instead, it separates direct biblical wording from paraphrase, tradition, and popular expression.

The safest habit is simple: check the exact wording, compare translations, and read the surrounding verses. A phrase may be meaningful, comforting, or traditional even when it is not a direct Bible quotation.

This document uses verse references more often than long Bible quotations, because exact wording varies by translation. Readers should check passages in the Bible translation they normally use.

What this guide is not

- It is not a complete dictionary of Bible quotations.
- It is not a judgment on whether a saying is spiritually useful.
- It is not a substitute for reading passages in context.
- It is not tied to one denomination or one Bible translation.

What it is

- A short reference guide to common phrases people often quote as Scripture.
- A way to distinguish biblical wording from Bible-adjacent wording.
- A starting point for further checking with Bible reference tools.

METHOD

How to read the verdicts

The phrases in this guide are grouped by careful verdicts. These verdicts are meant to be useful rather than absolute. Translation differences matter, and some phrases may be closer in one translation than another.

Verdict	Meaning
Bible phrase	The phrase, or very close wording, appears in Scripture. The surrounding context still matters.
Biblical idiom	The phrase comes through biblical language and has become a wider English expression.
Close paraphrase	The phrase captures a biblical idea closely, but may not be exact Bible wording.
Misquoted	A real passage is being shortened, altered, or quoted in a way that can change the meaning.
Not in that form	The phrase is often linked to a passage, but the popular wording or application is broader than the verse itself.
Traditional saying	The phrase may be common in Christian culture or theology, but it is not a direct Bible verse.
Not a Bible verse	The wording is not found as a direct Bible verse, even if related biblical themes exist.

A fair way to describe uncertain phrases

- Prefer "not found in the Bible in this wording" to "fake" when the phrase reflects a biblical theme.

- Prefer "often shortened" when a real verse is being quoted without important surrounding words.

- Prefer "traditional Christian saying" when the phrase belongs to church culture more than Bible text.

- Prefer verse references over isolated proof-texts when teaching or sharing.

REFERENCE TABLE - PART 1

Common phrases and careful verdicts

The notes below are intentionally brief. They are meant to help readers decide what to check next, not to replace reading the full passage.

Common phrase	Careful verdict	Closest biblical connection	Short note	Further reading
God helps those who help themselves	**Not a Bible verse**	Themes of diligence and trust appear throughout Scripture.	The exact saying is not a biblical verse. It can also imply self-reliance in a way that needs balancing with dependence on God.	QFB note
Cleanliness is next to godliness	**Not a Bible verse**	Ritual purity, washing, and holiness appear in biblical law and practice.	The phrase itself is not found as a Bible verse. It is better described as a traditional proverb with religious-sounding language.	Not-in-Bible hub
This too shall pass	**Not a Bible verse**	The Bible often contrasts temporary troubles with eternal hope.	The phrase is widely used as a proverb of comfort, but it is not a direct biblical quotation.	QFB note
Money is the root of all evil	**Misquoted**	1 Timothy 6:10	The common shortened version changes the sense. The verse concerns the love of money, not money itself.	QFB note
Love the sinner, hate the sin	**Traditional saying**	Related themes include mercy, repentance, holiness, and love of neighbor.	The phrase is not a direct Bible verse. It may express a theological idea, but it should not be presented as biblical wording.	Meanings hub
God will not give you more than you can handle	**Not in that form**	Often linked to 1 Corinthians 10:13.	The verse is about temptation and God providing a way of escape. It is often broadened into a claim about all suffering.	Not-in-Bible hub
Spare the rod, spoil the child	**Not exact wording**	Often connected to Proverbs 13:24 and related wisdom sayings.	The familiar phrase is not the exact wording of a Bible verse, though it echoes themes from Proverbs.	BibleHub Proverbs 13:24
The lion shall lie down with the lamb	**Not exact wording**	Isaiah 11:6	The image is close to Isaiah 11, but the familiar wording merges animals in a way the verse itself does not state.	BibleHub Isaiah 11:6

REFERENCE TABLE - PART 2

More phrases to check before quoting

Some of these are genuinely biblical phrases. Others are biblical in theme but not in exact wording. Even when the phrase is biblical, context can change how it should be used.

Common phrase	Careful verdict	Closest biblical connection	Short note	Further reading
Pride comes before a fall	**Close paraphrase**	Proverbs 16:18	This is close to the biblical idea, but the exact wording often differs by translation.	BibleHub Proverbs 16:18
The truth will set you free	**Bible phrase**	John 8:31-32	The phrase is biblical, but the setting matters: Jesus speaks about abiding in his word and becoming his disciples.	BibleGateway John 8
An eye for an eye	**Bible phrase**	Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Matthew 5:38-39	It appears in biblical legal contexts and is later addressed in Jesus' teaching on retaliation.	BibleHub Exodus 21:24
Judge not	**Bible phrase, often shortened**	Matthew 7:1-5	The phrase is biblical, but the surrounding passage is important. It warns against hypocritical judgment, not all discernment.	BibleHub Matthew 7:1
By the skin of my teeth	**Biblical idiom**	Job 19:20	This familiar English idiom comes through biblical language, though its meaning is now used more broadly.	BibleHub Job 19:20
Eat, drink, and be merry	**Biblical wording, risky motto**	Luke 12:19; see also Ecclesiastes themes of enjoyment and mortality.	The phrase appears in a parable about a foolish rich man, so it should not be used as a simple biblical endorsement of indulgence.	BibleGateway Luke 12
The writing is on the wall	**Biblical origin**	Daniel 5	The idiom comes from the narrative of Belshazzar's feast and the mysterious writing interpreted by Daniel.	BibleGateway Daniel 5
Turn the other cheek	**Bible phrase**	Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29	The phrase is biblical, but application should be handled carefully, especially where harm or abuse is involved.	BibleHub Matthew 5:39

CONTEXT

Why context changes meaning

A phrase can be true, familiar, and memorable while still being incomplete. Bible phrases often become detached from the paragraph, speaker, story, or argument in which they first appear.

Four common problems

Problem	What can happen
Shortening	A verse is cut down to a slogan, removing a condition, warning, or surrounding explanation.
Changing the subject	A passage about temptation, wisdom, money, judgment, or suffering is applied to every situation without checking the original setting.
Smoothing the wording	Popular wording becomes easier to remember than the actual wording of the verse.
Turning narrative into motto	A line from a parable or story is repeated as if it were a direct command or promise.

A good test

Before using a phrase as a Bible quotation, ask: "Could I point someone to the passage, explain who is speaking, and show how the surrounding verses support the way I am using it?" If not, the phrase may still be useful, but it should not be presented as a direct Bible quote.

REFERENCE TOOLS

Recommended Bible reference tools

The best way to check a phrase is to use more than one tool. Search the phrase, search key words, compare translations, and read the surrounding chapter.

Resource	Why it is useful
BibleGateway	Look up passages and compare wording across translations.
BibleProject	Accessible videos and articles on biblical themes, literary context, and genres.
Bible Hub	Parallel translations, interlinear tools, lexicons, commentaries, and cross-references.
Blue Letter Bible	Study tools for biblical words, commentaries, cross-references, and passage lookup.
STEP Bible	A deeper study tool with original-language and translation support.
OpenBible.info Topics	Topical cross-reference style lists that can help locate related passages.
Logos / Word by Word	Articles and guides on Bible study, interpretation, and biblical language.

Further reading from QuotesFromBible.com

Resource	Why it is useful
Phrases people think are in the Bible	A hub for familiar sayings often attributed to Scripture, with notes on wording and context.
Bible quote meanings explained	Short explanations of popular Bible phrases, words, and verses with attention to context.
Bible curiosities and common questions	Readable answers to Bible wording, translation, number, and context questions.
Bible references in culture	Bible phrases and references as they appear in films, music, literature, and public culture.

CHECKLIST

Before you quote a Bible phrase

Use this simple checklist when preparing a lesson, article, social post, card, sermon note, or personal message.

- **Check the exact wording.** Search the phrase in a Bible tool rather than relying on memory.
- **Compare translations.** A phrase may appear in one translation but not another.
- **Read the surrounding verses.** A single line may depend on the paragraph around it.
- **Identify the type of phrase.** Is it a verse, paraphrase, proverb, traditional saying, or cultural expression?
- **Check the speaker and setting.** A line from a parable, villain, sufferer, or narrator may need special care.
- **Avoid proof-texting.** Do not use a phrase to prove more than the passage itself says.
- **Link to a passage when possible.** Give readers a way to check the text themselves.

A short wording guide

Situation	Safer wording
If you are unsure	Say "often associated with the Bible" rather than "the Bible says."
If the wording is not exact	Say "a common paraphrase of" or "often linked to."
If the idea is biblical but the wording is not	Say "a traditional saying that echoes biblical themes."
If the context is disputed	Point readers to the passage and avoid using it as a slogan.

ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

Quick reference: 8 phrases to double-check

A short shareable summary for readers who want the main idea quickly.

Phrase	Quick note
God helps those who help themselves	Not a Bible verse. Check themes of trust, wisdom, and diligence separately.
Cleanliness is next to godliness	Not a Bible verse. It is a traditional proverb, not Scripture wording.
Money is the root of all evil	Usually misquoted. The biblical focus is the love of money.
God will not give you more than you can handle	Often linked to 1 Corinthians 10:13, but that passage is about temptation.
The lion shall lie down with the lamb	Close to Isaiah imagery, but not the exact wording of Isaiah 11:6.
Judge not	Biblical phrase, but often shortened without Matthew 7:2-5.
The truth will set you free	Biblical phrase, but the context is John 8:31-32.
The writing is on the wall	Biblical origin in Daniel 5, now a general English idiom.

Main habit to remember

A phrase can be meaningful without being a direct Bible verse. When accuracy matters, quote the passage, not just the proverb.

Explore the full reference list: quotesfrombible.com/not-in-bible

ABOUT

About this guide

This short guide was compiled by Daniel Marshe for QuotesFromBible.com as a public reference resource for checking popular Bible phrases, sayings, and quoted verses against Scripture, wording, translation, and context.

It is intentionally modest in scope. It gives readers a careful first answer and points them toward fuller checking with Bible reference tools and the surrounding biblical text.

About the compiler

Daniel Marshe is the editor of QuotesFromBible.com, a Bible quote reference project that checks popular phrases, sayings, and quoted verses against Scripture, wording, translation, and context.

Website

QuotesFromBible.com

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Important note

Bible wording varies by translation. This guide avoids long quotation and relies mainly on references so readers can check passages in their preferred translation.

Archive.org metadata suggestion

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